

The whole purpose of creating a General Mobile Radio Service was to give average citizens the same capabilities enjoyed by commercial and public safety users. As private citizens operating in a personal capacity, these users are prohibited from licensing in the part 90 services. Many of these proposals suggest restricting these capabilities in such a significant way that citizens will effectively have no further option to legitimately conduct similar operations. Compromising the GMRS capabilities removes those abilities completely from the grasp of the citizens that it was initially formed to serve. Cellular telephones do not easily allow group communications and are not comparable to GMRS communications in scope, accessibility, or reliability.

Changes in the Citizen's Band Class D serve as a historical precedent of converting a service to license by rule. That

service went from a community builder to near uselessness in a relatively short period of time. From a reliable source of assistance with responsible groups of citizens mobilized for the purpose of helping others, to a virtual wasteland populated mostly by stations in violation of many offenses beyond licensing. My experience in amateur and federal government communications systems gives me cause to believe that proposal to reduce the licensing requirement, repeater operation and power capabilities of this service will cause a ripple-effect of piracy in both the part 95 bands and the part 90 bands as users requiring the capabilities now available in a legitimate service are no longer available to this class of citizens whatsoever.

Capitulation on the part of the Commission to these companies sends another message to the communications users of the United States that adherence to the established rules is not a necessary responsibility. Many suggested changes to the Part 95 rules will serve to benefit only the electronics industry at the expense of legitimate licensees who have only demonstrated their compliance with the law.

1. Elimination of GMRS licensing (aka "license by rule?"), similar to the FRS and CB spectrum will do irreparable harm to the service and its users. Extending the licensing term from five to ten years would promote legitimate use of the band and a favorable environment to encourage licensing provided that the filing fees are not increased.

2. Changing the authorized bandwidth to 12.5KHz in line with the requirements of other services is a logical conclusion. Some consideration should be in place to allow a more gradual migration than the commercial services as the new channelization will create a hardship for many personal users. More careful consideration needs to be given for the distribution of channels by purpose and application when new ones are created by the change. Channelization of the service will create an opportunity for a "band plan" or usage guide designating "Calling channels?", "simplex-only" assignments and even the possibility of assigning a channel specifically for data communications, similar to Digital Selective Calling in the Part 80 service.

3. Decreasing of GMRS handheld radio output power from 5 to 2 watts will deteriorate the usefulness of the service. The

parallels of Part 90 and Part 95 are as logical as they are intuitive. The power output of a handheld radio should reflect this and be regulated at 4 watts.

4. Elimination of the use of repeaters in the GMRS service would cause irreparable harm to the service and its users by

eliminating a vital means of communications between family and friends. Repeaters in this service perform a certain, unique function of promoting coordinated use of the frequencies by creating a community out of the users. Also in many areas, GMRS Repeaters are utilized by many personal users in support of Non-Profit organizations that aid in disaster assistance activities, such as REACT, Red Cross, CERT, etc. Removal of the repeater capability will greatly decrease their effectiveness.

5. Consideration of a petition from Garmin to allow the transmission of GPS location information and user-generated text messages on certain GMRS channels. I agree that this should be allowed, but only on a specified data channel. The nature of these data communications is such that they can automatically handle interference and data collision issues on their own and it is likely that the evolution of technology will produce more uses for data in the interest of the GMRS purpose and scope. A dedicated frequency or frequency pair would allow a resource for data communications in a given space away from voice communications.

6. Prohibition of approval of dual VHF Marine/FRS radio. I agree with this prohibition. As a retired active duty member of the U.S. Coast Guard, a current U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliarist volunteer and a full-time Spectrum Manager/Frequency Planning consultant to the USCG, I have experienced that the consumers of these units very seldom understand the difference between the radio services well enough without guidance. My experience with marine safety has shown that when a marine user is in need of assistance, the radio must be dedicated to the marine purpose. FRS channels are not monitored or used by the Coast Guard. Additionally, there was already an issue where a non-licensed user of a dual-band radio inadvertently transmitted emergency communications on VHF-FM Channel 16. This led to a lengthy and expensive case for both the USCG and the FCC here in the San Francisco Bay area last year (2009).

7. Part 90 equipment type acceptance for Part 95 service: It is intuitive to the purpose and scope of the GMRS service that part 90 radios when properly programmed are more than adequate to operate efficiently and correctly in the personal radio service. There is no purpose to exclude them other than to eliminate the higher-quality equipment from the band. If and changes are to be made, it is that equipment for certification in the Part 95 band should be Part 90 compliant or better.

Sincerely,  
Eric Simmons, KB6YNO